

pears; is second in the nation in the production of winter wheat, potatoes, Concord grapes, and carrots; and contributes more than \$5 billion to the State's economy annually. Not only do all these facts signify the importance of the agriculture industry to the State of Washington and the nation, but highlight the importance of having the proper tools and chemicals necessary to produce one of the most abundant, economical, and safest food supplies in the world.

I agreed to be an original cosponsor the Regulatory Fairness and Openness Act of 1999 for many reasons, but the most significant reason comes down to common sense. I supported the passage of the Food Quality Protection Act in 1996 and still believe in the intent of the legislation. However, recent accounts from the agriculture industry cite concern about the practical application of reliable data and science to the process.

Just this week a 25-year-old apple farmer from Orondo, Washington visited my office to voice her concerns over the implementation of FQPA. Karen Simmons explained that with the current manner in which FQPA is being implemented, entire classes of pesticides are threatened with elimination. Should these tools of agriculture be lost, an orchard like Karen's faces possible extinction. Karen's story is not the first I've heard, as farmers from Washington have been invaluable in expressing their concerns to me over the future of their livelihood.

Karen's account mimics the thousands of reports my colleagues and I have heard from growers across this country. Karen, like many farmers, never follows the application suggestions prescribed by the chemicals she uses. Not only does she not follow these recommendations for practical purposes, but because of the cost incurred as well.

For example, one of the pesticides she utilizes recommends application up to twice a week, but Karen informed us that she rarely uses it that frequently. While Karen might not utilize this chemical often, it is imperative that she has it as a tool. Should this tool be eliminated altogether, Karen's crop is susceptible to infestation, thereby putting her entire orchard in jeopardy.

Unfortunately, in establishing the risk cup for chemicals, EPA has been using application recommendations, often referred to as default assumptions, and not taking into consideration actual usage. This approach is threatening the tools growers have at their disposal. That is why it is imperative that we incorporate into the implementation of FQPA a rulemaking process, allowing growers, chemical utilizers, and household pest producers the ability to divulge actual usage and to apply practical sense to the process. How could we suggest threatening the

livelihood of the American farmer and others, while not providing for them an avenue to participate, comment and clarify?

Children's health is equally important, and, as several of my colleagues have suggested, improper application of the FQPA to household pest controls could create a host of health hazards for children and the elderly. For example, there is a real threat that current FQPA implementation could eliminate the use of some household insecticides and repellants. As many of you know, children and the elderly are susceptible to disease, often carried by cockroaches and other insects. Improper control of these pests could equate to serious health hazards across the nation, a scenario none of us predicted with the passage of FQPA.

Again, I stress that the intent of the legislation is not to alter the importance or significance of human health, but to ensure that decisions regarding health risks are informed and not hasty, that the intent of the FQPA is carried out with the use of sound science and practical application, that a dose of common sense is applied, and that adequate time is available to make certain all decisions and tolerance standards are healthy and equitable.

Without question, the United States produces the most abundant, desirable, inexpensive, and safest food supplies in the world. The FQPA must be implemented in a fashion that not only takes into account these very facts, but continues to consider the needs, choices and health of the American consumer.

I thank my colleagues for their continuing interest in this issue, and look forward to working with everyone to pass the Regulatory Fairness and Openness Act of 1999.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I rise today to speak for a moment about the Regulatory Fairness and Openness Act that I am pleased to cosponsor with a number of my colleagues who are concerned about the state of agriculture today. I want to thank Senator HAGEL and his staff for their work on this legislation which reflects the input of a number of agriculture groups, including the American Farm Bureau Federation.

When the Congress passed the Food Quality Protection Act in 1996, the idea was to update our pesticide laws so that our farmers could continue to provide the safest and most economical food supply in the world. FQPA eliminated the outdated zero-tolerance Delaney clause for pesticide residues and provided the EPA a framework to review and approve pesticides based on the best scientific evidence available about any health risks these chemicals may pose. What was not intended was to give the EPA the authority to embark on a course to eliminate pes-

ticides based on unrealistic, worst-case scenarios while keeping important stakeholders in the dark.

Agriculture in my state of Oregon is incredibly diverse. We have everything from large wheat or nursery operations to small berry farms and hazelnut orchards. While implication of FQPA will surely have implications for program commodities like wheat and soybeans, it is the small specialty crops grown in my state that I am most concerned will be the first to find what may be the only available crop protection tool arbitrarily axed by EPA. At a time when farms all across the country are in the grip of a price depression crisis, our farmers simply can't afford to take another hit—especially one from their own government.

Despite our hopes to the contrary, it has become apparent in recent months that legislation is needed to steer the Environmental Protection Agency back towards science-based review of pesticide tolerances under the Food Quality Protection Act. The Regulatory Fairness and Openness Act that we are introducing today requires the EPA to expose its decisionmaking process for public comment, identify areas where assumptions were made, expedite data collection procedures where needed, and streamline the process to get economically viable alternative products approved. The common-sense legislation is the result of consultation with more than 60 agriculture and pest control organizations.

Mr. President, the public has a right to know what processes are being used in the implementation of the FQPA and how the EPA is arriving at its decisions. Our farmers have a right to know that important crop protection chemicals will not be eliminated on a whim by a federal agency. I hope colleagues agree with me that this measure of regulatory relief is urgently needed, and I urge my colleagues to join me in support of the Regulatory Fairness and Openness Act.

#### THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Thursday, July 29, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,640,577,276,840.14 (Five trillion, six hundred forty billion, five hundred seventy-seven million, two hundred seventy-six thousand, eight hundred forty dollars and fourteen cents).

One year ago, July 29, 1998, the Federal debt stood at \$5,543,291,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred forty-three billion, two hundred ninety-one million).

Five years ago, July 29, 1994, the Federal debt stood at \$4,636,362,000,000 (Four trillion, six hundred thirty-six billion, three hundred sixty-two million).

Twenty-five years ago, July 29, 1974, the Federal debt stood at